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An innovative model for inter-professional, team-based treatment planning in comprehensive care clinic

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Griffith University School of Dentistry and Oral Health introduced a novel concept of Team Based Treatment Planning (TBTP), aiming to facilitate inter-professional and inter-disciplinary clinical training, as well as strengthen and formalise peer-learning structures. Fifty student teams were organised in 2009, each of which included students from 3 different programs (Dental Science, Dental Technology and Oral Health Therapy) and 3 different years of study (3rd, 4th and 5th year students). After an initial screening by the staff, all incoming patients were allocated to the teams, which became collectively responsible for the treatment planning and delivery of comprehensive healthcare interventions. This study prospectively evaluated the impact of the TBTP on students' perceptions and attitudes towards teamwork and their role in a team of peers.

A total of 202 students who participated in 50 TBTP teams were prospectively surveyed at baseline, 6 and 12 months after introduction of the TBTP.

"Reliable" and "Responsible" appear the most important qualities of both an effective team leader and member. Furthermore, senior students identified "hard working" as an important quality of the ideal leader as opposed to junior students who ranked "supportive" higher. Attitudes of senior students towards TBTP appeared to decline significantly, while junior students remained consistently more positive. In addition, junior students appear more likely to enjoy working in a team and consider themselves more effective in a team. No gender differences were observed, other than female students appearing less confident to lead a team. The model was received positively from educators and students, while it also solved some practical problems related to distribution of patients and increased students' exposure to advanced treatment procedures. The first few months of application required frequent troubleshooting and adjustments of administrative issues. It was concluded that the function of student directed

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inter-disciplinary, inter-professional treatment planning teams has been a promising scheme, however it might pose strain on senior students, impacting on their attitudes to such modes of work.